

# A RECORD OF MISJUDGMENT

Mr. YOUNG of Ohio. Mr. President, in one of the Nation's great newspapers, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, there was recently published an editorial regarding the statements of Gen. Maxwell Taylor. Personally, I lack confidence in his judgment and in his statements regarding Vietnam.

Last June when he testified before a joint meeting of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Armed Services, he predicted that the Hanoi government would not commit its army fully to the conflict in South Vietnam. He stated:

They would not do it because they know we would destroy their economy.

Recently he stated that there are three of North Vietnam's eight combat divisions presently fighting us in South Vietnam. If this later statement is accurate, then his previous prediction is just another of his statements proved wrong.

Furthermore, at this same committee hearing when questioned regarding the then civilian Prime Minister of the Saigon government, Quat, he stated he was certain this government was stable and would not be overthrown by a coup. Evidently, General Taylor's guess was fantastically wrong, or if based on information furnished by our CIA, his intelligence was bad. The committee records show his answers. The facts are that within the following 48 hours, before General Taylor left the United States for Vietnam, 10 generals operating one of those frequent Saigon coups, overturned the civilian Prime Minister and shortly thereafter the present Prime Minister, Ky, was installed by these generals.

Incidentally, Ky was born and reared near Hanoi. Some members of his present cabinet were also born and reared in North Vietnam. This is just further evidence that we are involved in a miserable civil war in Vietnam.

The chairman in South Vietnam of the National Liberation Front, so-called, is Nguyen Huu Tho, a Saigon lawyer, who, it is stated, is not a Communist. This National Liberation Front was formed years ago. It is said the Vietcong military units come under its direction. Also, it has representatives at Hanoi and at the capitals of other Asiatic, African, and European nations. Of course, if

there are negotiations to bring about peace, it would be futile to give in to the demands of Air Marshal Ky of the Saigon government and bar representatives of the Vietcong. There can be no cease-fire or armistice secured at the conference table unless representatives of the Vietcong are present as delegates independent of the delegates of the Hanoi and Saigon governments.

I ask unanimous consent that the editorial referred to from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch entitled "A Long Record of Misjudgment" be printed at this point in the Record.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

## A LONG RECORD OF MISJUDGMENT

Victory is just around the corner. That is the message Gen. Maxwell Taylor sought to convey to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the hearings on Vietnam Thursday. The general's sincerity is not to be doubted, nor is there any doubt that his optimistic forecast if believable would be most welcome to the American people. But it must be measured against earlier promises of imminent success that did not materialize, and against conflicting forecasts, within the past few days, of a long, hard war.

The unhappy truth is that at every stage of this escalating conflict whenever Congress raised questions about the deepening commitment, administration spokesmen have painted a rosy picture of imminent victory which subsequent events wiped out. General Taylor himself, along with Secretary McNamara, has repeatedly misjudged the situation. In October 1963, for example, he and Secretary McNamara returned from an inspection tour to announce officially "their judgment that the major part of the (American) military task can be completed by the end of 1965."

In 1965 the United States had 15,000 troops in Vietnam. Today there are 205,000 troops on the ground and another 100,000 naval and air forces are engaged.

No matter how sincere General Taylor may have been in his 1963 estimate, or in his present one, the fact is inescapable that he has been disastrously and repeatedly wrong in the past and his judgment must therefore be questioned today. The record is incontrovertible, it seems to us, that the authors of this Vietnam war, who have repeatedly advised the President to escalate just once more in the hope of an elusive victory, have never really understood what they were getting the American people into. The time is long past to reject this kind of advice.

The idea that we have once more turned a corner and are now on the way to victory is also controverted by testimony before Congress, released only this week, of Mr. McNamara and Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. They were not before television cameras but behind closed doors. In the heavily censored transcript of their evidence before the Senate Armed Services Committee, both indicated the Pentagon looks forward to a long and difficult war lasting many years. Though they denied that final decisions have been taken, there is no doubt that the Pentagon is thinking in terms of putting at least 600,000 troops into Vietnam before the often predicted victory is attained.

And yet that prediction of victory, like others before it, rests upon imponderables which can destroy it—in this case, on the hunch, guess or hope that another escalation of such magnitude will not bring China with its millions of troops into the war.

General Taylor plainly revealed, perhaps unconsciously, why there is such a discrepancy between the limited war which the administration proclaims and the unlimited nature of its objectives. He spoke as if the objective is the modest one of simply "making Hanoi behave." It became clear, however, that in his mind this phrase means the total defeat of the Vietcong and the establishment in South Vietnam of an anti-Communist government—which could only exist, as 10 years of experience shows, under a permanent protectorate of American military power.

If the administration shares this view of the objective, then it is seriously misleading the people in professing a desire for peace negotiations. The only possible basis for negotiations would be a willingness on both sides to accept a compromise that fell short of total victory for either.

According to reports of Secretary General U Thant's peace explorations, Hanoi's terms for negotiation may not be so extreme as they have been pictured. They are said to include a pause in the bombing, a halt to escalation of the ground fighting, and acceptance of the Vietcong as a party to negotiations. President de Gaulle, who has written Ho Chi Minh expressing willingness to participate actively in a settlement at the proper time, is said to feel that peace calls for a three-stage process—first, a cease-fire, then establishment of a broadly representative coalition government in South Vietnam, and finally a reconvened Geneva Conference to guarantee the neutrality of both South and North Vietnam.

There would be nothing dishonorable in a settlement along these lines, and American policy ought to be firmly pointed in this direction as the alternative to an unlimited military escalation with increasing risk of world war. Our true national interests can be better served by a neutralized southeast Asia than by a costly and misguided effort to establish a national military outpost on Asian soil.